

Butner Finalist for Homeland Security Federal Research Lab

WASHINGTON - North Carolina **Congressmen David Price** (NC-4), **Brad Miller** (NC-13) and **Bob Etheridge** (NC-02) today announced the selection of a Triangle-area location as a finalist for a proposed Homeland Security research lab.

The research facility is expected to provide hundreds of new high-tech jobs and generate billions in revenue for the local economy over the next 20 years. The research at the high-security lab would be designed to protect U.S. agriculture, the food supply and public health from a bioterrorist attack involving the intentional introduction of foreign animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease. The new facility would replace the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York, which has become outdated for the current and future Homeland Security needs.

Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Jackson informed the local congressmen in a telephone call earlier this morning that a site in Butner, NC was selected as one of five finalists throughout the country for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility. Sites in Kansas, Georgia, Texas and Mississippi also advanced to the final round of selection. A total of 17 sites were originally under consideration until today's announcement of the Department's short list.

"I'm convinced there isn't a location in the country that is better suited to support this research lab," said Price, who is chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee in the House. "Our area's fine research universities, the site's proximity to the airport and RTP, and our highly educated workforce all make the Triangle site a perfect fit for this critical Homeland Security facility."

"This site is important to our national security," said Rep. Miller, who represents the town of Butner in Congress. "It will help ensure that the country is prepared for biological dangers by studying diseases such as avian flu and other animal-based biological threats. It will also bring highly-paid jobs to skilled workers in our area, creating some of the most sophisticated research in the world to create even more jobs."

"I have always supported the Department of Homeland Security taking an all-hazards approach to protecting the American public. Protecting our nation's agricultural resources is critical to maintain a safe and secure society. The next-generation National Agro- and Biosecurity Facility will ensure that we have the knowledge and capacity to respond to any threat to agriculture," said Etheridge.

"The mix of high-technology research and development, world-class universities, and an agricultural and biotechnology base makes North Carolina ideal for NBAF," Etheridge added. I

am pleased that the Department of Homeland Security has recognized our community's strengths in considering the North Carolina Consortium for NBAF as a finalist for the facility. The time is right, the need is urgent, and I can think of no better place than North Carolina."

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